

Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference in CPIC

CPIC/Media Conferences

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 1130 hours on Thursday 01 August 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Kevin Sullivan	• The Anniversary of the High Representatives first war time visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina. • Federation Defence Ministers telephone conversation with the High Representative. • PLIP press statement.
b. OSCE	Emir Salihovic	• OSCE opens Political Resource Centre. • Education forum.
c. UNMIBH	Alun Roberts	• Three raids by STOP teams. • Explosions in Prijedor area.
d. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander John Coppard	• No formal statement.

2. Thirty-one members of the media and four television crews attended the conference.

3. There were no questions.

C. Barraud

Lt. Col. (FR A),

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

We are in a summer mood, because the weather is so good, after so many days of rain. As you can see we have radical departure from normal procedure, with Alun sitting at that end of the table, instead of here, which will probably add to the creativity of the event. As you can see, I have not got anybody on my left, which makes me feel as if I am missing a wing, so wingless, I shall proceed.

Tomorrow is the tenth anniversary of the first wartime visit by Paddy Ashdown to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He arrived here in Sarajevo aboard a RAF Hercules transport plane. He visited the City Centre and Dobrinja and at the courtesy of Larry Hollinsworth of UNHCR whom many of you might remember, he stayed overnight in a dugout at the airport. His visit coincided with a period of lively exchanges of small arms and artillery fire, which prompted him to conclude and I quote from his diary "this certainly makes British economic problems seem rather less exciting".

As Paddy Ashdown said when he made his inaugural speech, to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament, since his first visit ten year ago. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made considerable progress, however its current economic problems are unfortunately, rather too exciting.

The Republika of Srpska Statistics Institute released figures yesterday, which show a decline of 11.5% in industrial production in the first six months of this year. This took place at a time when the Serb deputies in the Bosnia and Herzegovina state parliament were holding up economic legislation that would create the business environment, to stimulate growth and reverse the decline in industrial production. The High Representative believes that the only

way to generate growth, jobs and prosperity is to clear away the economic barriers between the two entities and consolidate a single economic space.

Another piece of crucial legislation that is currently awaiting parliamentary approval is the amendment to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Civil Aviation law. Which, would provide for the appointment of a single Director General of the Civil Aviation Department. Instead of the current situation – there are three Director Generals – which is unacceptable if Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to integrate in international aviation structures and if it wants to integrate in European structures as a whole. Once again, the passage of the necessary amendment is being held up by Serb deputies, this was the subject of a press conference this morning at Office of the High Representative and details regarding that will be forthcoming during the course of the day.

The same absence of urgency, which we have seen with regard to economic legislation, has been compounded by the prevalence of corruption, once again, in his inaugural speech the High Representative, made it clear that tackling corruption was at the top of his priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This afternoon at 16:30 the High Representative along with Robert Beecroft of the OSCE, will hold a press conference at the Office of the High Representative on strengthening the capacity of the special audit of public accounts. Since this is an essential tool in catching thieves and in ensuring taxpayers money goes towards spending on improving citizen's lives.

There was some coverage in the press this morning about a request by Federation Defence Minister Anic, to have a meeting with Paddy Ashdown. The High Representative expressed his dismay that he would learn about this request from the media instead of directly from the minister.

This morning Mr. Anic and the High Representative spoke on the telephone and the High Representative made it clear that in future if ever requests were received through the media rather than the proper way, the requests would not be acceded to. However, Mr. Anic, explained that the issue had been somewhat misrepresented in the media. And the two had a conversation on the telephone during which, the High Representative agreed with Mr. Anic, that the failure to appoint a Federation Finance Minister disrupts the work of the government and reflects badly on the credibility of the Parliament.

Finally, as all of you will be aware, we issued a Property Law Implementation Plan press release yesterday, which I am sure you all read with interest. There were some geographical anomalies in the press release which, you may also have spotted. So, I have brought along a revised Property Law Implementation Plan press release, which is geographically unimpeachable. Thank you very much.

Emir Salihovic – OSCE

Good morning everybody, I have two short points for you today.

First of all, I would like to announce that a new Political Resource Centre was opened in Brcko today and that the OSCE Deputy Head of Mission, Ambassador Dieter Woltmann opened the Centre, which is the thirteenth of its kind in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The OSCE's network of Political Resource Centres was established in 1998 to provide political parties and independent candidates with the necessary resources to participate in the creation of a pluralistic and multi-ethnic political environment. I will not talk too much; there is a full press release on the opening, outside on the table.

The second point I would like to mention is actually a reminder for you. There is an education forum today at the Holiday Inn Hotel, it is the first in a series of co-

ordination meetings, were the local and international organisation will deal with the issue of the reform of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the end of the meeting at 13:00 today there will be a press conference and you are all cordially invited to attend and will have the opportunity to ask questions about what was discussed. That is all from OSCE today thank you.

Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

Good morning from UNMIBH.

First of all, following this mornings press briefing, there will be the separate presentation to mark the first year of work since UNMIBH IPTF Special Trafficking Operations Project STOP, was established in July of last year. UNMIBH invite media to remain for the video presentation, which will be presented by Ms. Celhia Lavarene the Special Advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary General on gender issues and policy matters.

On the same subject on 29 July, three raids took place by STOP teams of local police and IPTF on three night bars in Vitez, in Canton 6. In one of the raids, at the Tivoli bar, local police and IPTF found three young women from Moldavia. All three asked for IPTF assistance as trafficking victim. They were taken to the IOM shelter in Sarajevo for further interviews.

I want to go back to the issue of the series of explosions in the Prijedor area, where 13 separate incidents have occurred since 14 April 2002. UNMIBH is encouraged by the decision, on the 31 July, of the Chief of Police in Prijedor Vojislav Pelkic, to make a public statement live on Prijedor Radio. In which he said, I quote "Prijedor police and the Chief of Police condemn the incidents to the Islamic community building last weekend, the explosion as well as the other similar incident that have occurred recently in Prijedor" unquote.

In the past the Prijedor police have issued only written public statements issuing concern of such incidents, but have not made a live broadcast at the level of the Chief of Police to publicly condemn those incidents.

In accordance with UNMIBH 24 hours transparency practice, the Chief of Police not only in Prijedor, but elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina are expected to make a public statement to media, condemning high profile and or return related security incidents, within 24 hours of them happening. The Chief of Police in Dubica, not far from Prijedor also made a statement carried on local television, condemning a recent incident in a Bosniak return related area in Dubica Municipality.

UNMIBH also notes that police in the Republika of Srpska have responded quickly and professionally to the few return related incidents that have occurred effecting Bosniak returnees. Of particular concern was an explosion in Bratunac in the Eastern Republika of Srpska, on 28 July, which injured one Bosniak returnee. The police quickly sealed off the site of the explosion, initiated a prompt investigation, intensified their patrols and of note, the local Police Chief met immediately with the returnee community to reassure their concerns. UNMIBH observes that the Republika of Srpska police are increasingly taking the initiative regarding return related incidents when they occur.

Also in a year of record returns, the number of return related incidents continues to show a marked decrease. In July 2002, for Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole, 19 such incidents were recorded; this compares with 29 for the same month last year and 32 such incidents for the period in July of 2000. Total minority return related incidents for Bosnia and Herzegovina recorded by the IPTF Human Rights for 2002, so far stands at 137, while it was a 320 total for the whole of 2001, and that is all I have this morning, thank you.

Lieutenant Commander Coppard – SFOR

We have no formal statement from SFOR, other than to let you know that your usual spokesman Major Scott Lundy, is back from vacation and I am sure, you will waste no time in putting him back to work. Are there any questions?

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

We must have some questions...nothing at all? OK thank you very much.